quintal in addition to the minimum Support Price of Rs. 455/- per quintal for the wheat offered for safe to the Central Pool during 1998-99 Rabi Marketing Season. The amount of bonus is payable from 1.4.1998 to 10.6.1998.

(c) No such decision has yet been taken by the Government.

(d) There is no such proposal at present.

Financial Assistance to Tamil Nadu for Setting up Consumer Courts

1079. SHRI S. MUTHU MANI: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the total amount sanctioned to the State Government of Tamil Nadu during the last two financial years in the form of financial assistance to set up and strengthen the infrastructure of Consumer Courts;

(b) whether Government have received any request from the State Government of Tamil Nadu to consider the reallocation of financial assistance for strengthening the infrastructure of Consumer Courts; and

(c) what is the total number of Consumer Courts set-up by the State Government of Tamil Nadu during the last two financial years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI SATYAPAL SINGH YADAV): (a) A total financial assistance of Rs. 2.70 crores has been sanctioned and released to the State Government of Tamil Nadu during the financil year 1995-96 and 1996-97 for strengthening the infrastructure of the Consumer Courts in that State.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) As per the information made available by the State Government of Tamil Nadu, there are 24 District Fora in the State of Tamil Nadu. No additional District Fora have been established during the last two financial years.

Condition of Sugar Industry in the Country

1080. DR. B.B. DUTTA: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the sugar industry in the country is not in a good health today;

(b) if so, the details in this regard;

(c) the main reasons for the poor performance by the sugar industry in the country; and

(d) the steps taken by Government to revitalise the sugar industry?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI SATYAPAL SINGH YADAV): (a) to (c) The existing Sugar industry in the country is not perceived to be a particularly healthy one from the financial point of view. In view of the low rate of return in this sector, new production capacity is not being created at the required pace. Generally, the public financial institutions are also not favourably considering proposals for financing of new sugar capacity. The major reasons for the poor financial performance of the sugar industry are as under:-

(i) Sugar is subject to statutory levy as also distribution control. For the quantity of sugar acquired by Government against levy, the return to the sugar mills is substantially lower than what would be obtained at open market prices. The distribution control also reduces the opportunity of the sugar mills to adopt an independent marketing strategy.

(ii) Historically, the sugar industry is subject to violent cyclic variations. These variations are principally caused by the increase or decrease of sugarcane availability, linked to the motivation of the farmer to cultivate sugarcane vis-a-vis other competing crops.

(iii) In years of high sugar production, sugar mills have to bear the carrying cost of high sugar stocks.